United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council holds closed formal meeting on election of new Secretary-General.

- Secretary-General's Executive Delegate holds talks with Iraqi Ministers in Baghdad on future of United Nations humanitarian activities in that country.

- United States tells Administrative and Budgetary Committee that basing rates of assessment on capacity to pay is responsible for increasingly negative attitude of Member States about the scale.

- Secretary-General ends two-day semi-official visit to Milan and Florence; to go to Rome tomorrow for meetings with Italian authorities.

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The Security Council met late afternoon in a closed formal session concerning the election of the new Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar's present term ends on 31 December.

Members of the Council have met previously in informal consultations on the subject to consider several candidates for that position.

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The Secretary-General's Executive Delegate, Sadruddin Aga Khan, held extensive meetings in Baghdad yesterday and today with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Foreign Minister Ahmed Hussein Khodali on the future of the United Nations humanitarian activities in Iraq.

A United Nations official, accompanying Sadruddin Aga Khan, said the talks had focused on the continued implementation of the United Nations Humanitarian Operation under the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding reached in April. Discussions also covered the funding of humanitarian

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activities and eventual oil production for export. The Executive Delegate had expressed hope that he would be in a position to announce positive results at a press conference in Baghdad tomorrow.

The official said Sadruddin Aga Khan had impressed upon the Iraqi authorities the need for a continued significant United Nations presence in the country, in the interest of the Iraqi people and in particular the vulnerable groups.

The Memorandum was signed by the Iraqi Foreign Minister and the Executive Delegate on 18 April, nine days after the Secretary-General had appointed him to the position of Executive Delegate for humanitarian assistance to Iraq, Kuwait and the border areas, "to ensure a prompt and effective response" to the situation. According to a report by the Secretary-General on the United Nations humanitarian operation in Iraq, dated 4 November, the inter-agency relief programme today covers the work of eight United Nations agencies, 18 non-governmental agencies, and a contingent of 500 United Nations guards. In total about 1000 international staff serve in Iraq under this programme.

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The representative of the United States pointed out in the General Assembly's Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) this morning that basing the scale of assessments solely on the capacity to pay was responsible for the increasingly negative attitude of Member States about the scale.

George E. Moose of the United States made the statement during the Committee's debate of the question of the scale of assessments saying that member countries might view their assessment levels more positively if their rates took into account the benefits and privileges that accrued as attributes of membership in the Organization.

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Kees Spaans of Netherlands introduced a draft resolution on the financial reports and audited financial statements, by which the Secretary-General would be asked to appoint a consultant to propose a set of accounting standards for the United Nations system.

Also this morning, the Committee took up the administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies. Speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, Erik Lindfors of Sweden said the proposed set of common accounting standards for the United Nations system should be based, whenever possible, on the standards of the International Accounting Standards Committee and on the Accounting Standards Committee of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions. The United Nations could then profit from future theoretical and practical developments in the accounting fields, at little or no cost, he said.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar ended today his two-day semi-official visit to Milan and Florence and will embark tomorrow on his official visits to Italy, Spain and France.

In Florence today, he received the "Medal of the University of Florence" and delivered an address on the theme of "Sovereignty and International Responsibility".

Tomorrow, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar will fly to Rome for meetings with the Italian Government and on Saturday, 23 November, he will meet Pope Jean Paul II.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar will travel to Madrid on Monday for talks with the Spanish Government and to Paris on Wednesday, where the next day he will meet the President of France, François Mitterrand. He will return to New York over the weekend of 30 November.

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